

# MILESTONES

By Joe Lucier, Adult Probation Officer/Odawa Adult Healing to Wellness Coordinator

The Waabshki-Miigwan Drug Court Program (WMDCP) was developed by the LTBB Tribal Court Staff in 2010.

*The mission of the Waabshki-Miigwan Drug Court Program is to implement a collaborative partnership among the community, service providers, court and adults who face substance abuse challenges in order to restore holistic balance using Odawa values and teachings as envisioned by our ancestors in order to ignite the healing and rehabilitation of non-violent addicted offenders.*

While developing the WMDCP, we used many already established and proven recovery principles. The LTBB Culture served as our main guide. The Seven Grandfather Teachings, Medicine Wheel Teachings and the White Feather Story are the foundation of WMDCP.

We used the *Ten Key Components of Wellness Courts* as a guide when organizing the overall structure of our court program. We examined many examples of how other tribal drug courts utilized these guidelines, and in many cases, were able to adopt their ideas into our program.

WMDCP has utilized the *12 Steps* as a guide in developing the treatment portion of the program. These programs are established and successful in treating drug and alcohol addiction. *Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)* and *The Red Road to Wellbriety* make up the core of our treatment curriculum. Many Natives have used these principles to get clean and sober. See **Quote 1-A**

**Quote 1-A** "Time and again, our Elders have said that the 12 Steps of AA are just the same as the principles that our ancestors lived by, with only one change. When we place the 12 Steps in a circle, then they come into alignment with the circle teachings that we know from many of our tribal ways. When we think of them in a circle and use them a little differently, then the words will be more familiar to us."

- The Red Road to Wellbriety

The WMDCP, obviously, would not exist



In November 2010, Adult Probation Officer/Odawa Adult Healing to Wellness Coordinator Joe Lucier (pictured on the left) and Court Administrator Bernadette Kiogima (pictured in the middle) were asked to present the Waabshki-Miigwan Drug Court Program at the National Training Conference for Criminal Justice and Community Leaders in Green Bay, WI.

without the help of all of these components and many others. We hope to honor the Creator and all the people who developed the ideas incorporated into our Drug Court Program by using them in a good way. Furthermore, we invite any other court entities to use the WMDCP or any of its components that might be helpful for their people.

The Waabshki-Miigwan Drug Court Program Curriculum is a 44-week program which utilizes Odawa values and teachings to encourage the adoption of a healthy, balanced lifestyle as envisioned by our ancestors, and to eliminate harmful behaviors that have caused negative consequences for our clients. WMDCP has four phases, the learning level (eight weeks), the accepting level (10 weeks), the willing level (12 weeks) and the succeeding level (14 weeks). WMDCP Clients work closely with the WMDCP Team to ensure maximum potential is achieved.

This 10-month, four phase program, is a compilation of 44 weekly responsibilities. We encourage our clients to focus on one week and even one day at a time. Each week's assignments must be completed successfully before moving on to the following week. See **Figure 1-B** on page 2.

WMDCP assignments and tasks are balanced between spiritual, emotional, physical and mental wellness activities. **Spiritual health** activities include self-help meetings, daily prayer and meditation and Twelve Step Work in either

AA or the White Bison Medicine Wheel Teachings. **Emotional health** activities include assigned WMDCP cultural and wellness activities laid out in the WMDCP workbook. These activities include various engaging tasks designed to instill Odawa culture as well as challenge the drug court client. **Physical health** activities include weekly physical exercise to be chosen by the client and negative random/scheduled drug and alcohol screens. **Mental health** activities are laid out in periodic therapy sessions with a substance abuse counselor on staff. Clients must simultaneously complete these weekly spiritual, emotional, physical and mental health activities in order to advance to the next week's assignments. Failure to complete all assigned tasks can halt the client's progress and extend the length of time until successful completion of the WMDCP.

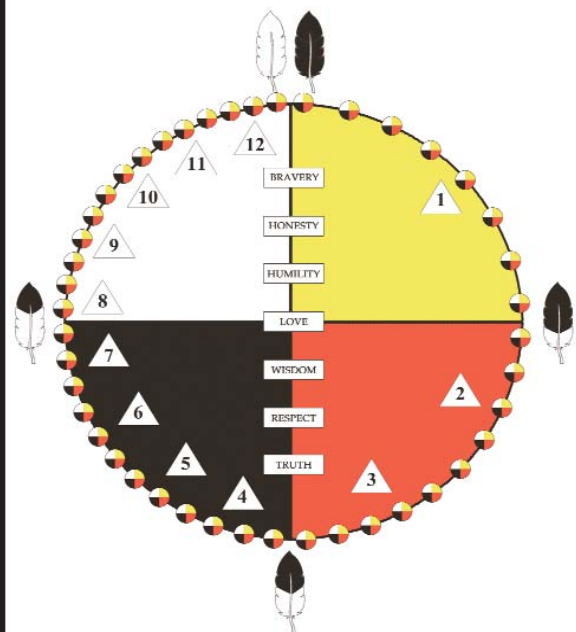
The WMDCP is laid out in a way easily understood by the drug court program client. Upon acceptance into the program, each client will receive a week-by-week planner, a week-by-week workbook, access to the drug court resources and, finally, the helpful support of the entire WMDCP team.

Every WMDCP client must essentially complete only three things:

1. Attendance at all assigned counseling, probation, court and self-help meetings assigned in the WMDCP week-by-week planner;

**Figure 1-B** Week-to-Week Diagram (Poster)

The WMDCP Week-to-Week Diagram is a tool used to display client progress in the curriculum. Throughout the program, the client will receive incentive patches for successful completion of certain tasks. For example, when a client completes step 1, they will receive a patch that symbolizes his or her completion of that step. Other patches are awarded for work in the Seven Grandfather teachings, the 12 steps and for advancing to the next phase. The client also receives a medicine wheel patch for each successful week completed. As the client progresses through the WMDCP program, his or her diagram will become increasingly detailed until he or she finally completes the diagram upon graduation. Below is an example of what a completed diagram will look like when a client is successful in completing the WMDCP.



2. All the projects and assignments laid out in the WMDCP week-by-week workbook; and

3. Compliance with all the WMDCP rules and regulations with an emphasis on maintaining sobriety and clean time.

When a client successfully accomplishes A, B, and C simultaneously, then they advance to the next week's curriculum. Forty-four successful weeks will result in graduation from the WMDCP and a fresh start on life. See Figure 1-C

The LTBB Adult Drug Court Coordinator, the LTBB Adult Probation Officer and the assigned therapists work collaboratively to monitor and supervise each client. In addition, clients are required to appear at regularly scheduled WMDCP hearings to report on progress and drawbacks to completion of program tasks and assignments. The WMDCP team members conduct weekly meetings to discuss the status of each client and make appropriate adjustments

in the client's treatment plan as needed.

Upon successful completion of the WMDCP, it is expected our clients will acquire the following:

- A foundational knowledge of recovery principles;
- A new appreciation of the benefits of living a crime free lifestyle;
- An ability to logically and efficiently overcome life obstacles;
- A better understanding of the Odawa culture;
- Better overall health; and, most importantly,

### Hope for their future

### Acknowledgements

The Waabshki-Miigwan Program is a compilation of various tools and techniques that have been utilized by our tribal citizens to obtain and maintain a life of sobriety. It is acknowledged we have not created this program, but have merely gathered effective principles and attempted to present them in a well-defined curriculum that is simply understood and completed by participants. Being part of the vast worldwide tribal community, we are incredibly blessed and grateful for the endless resources made available over the last few years. The work and research of other Native peoples and communities has benefited us all as we continue to build our ever-growing tribal network. We were humbled as we realized the vast knowledge and wisdom so freely shared among Native communities pertaining to recovery.

The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians has benefited much from the teachings of our ancestors and other tribal communities. We would like to formally thank the many local people and others from all around Indian country,

who gave their time and expertise generously in support of recovering Natives. Just as one individual cannot heal without the help of another, we couldn't have constructed the Waabshki-Miigwan Program without the help of our fellow man.

We would like to especially thank the following nations and organizations for their guidance and contributed resources: Tribal Law & Policy Institute, White Bison, American University, Alcoholics Anonymous and of course, to all the established drug courts who provided access to their drug court policies, procedures and various other court documents.

Furthermore, this experience would not have been possible without the collaboration and cooperation of the three branches of government for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. Thank you so much for your contributions. With the support of one another, we have exceeded the high expectations set for this drug court program project.

We hope the Waabshki-Miigwan Program will help others in our community to start the process of cleansing. By expressing our interest in this area, we have taken the first step in resolving the current substance abuse/use issues in our community. It will be our great pleasure to assist in any way we can. In order to aid others in better understanding our program, we have compiled a Program Manual available for review. If you are interested, you can obtain a copy from the LTBB Tribal Court.

We are all white feathers that have become dirty in some way. Some of the dirt has been heaped on us, and some we have put on ourselves. With each other's help, we can continue to walk the Good Road and restore the health of our communities. Again, Chi Miigwetch to you all for making this an unforgettable experience, and we express our deepest gratitude for giving our community and others an opportunity they will be able to treasure forever.

**Figure 1-C**

